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Albino Robins at Notre Dame.

BY BROTHER ALPHONSUS, C. S. C.

The robin seems to be a species in which albinos are not uncommon. Within the past six years there have appeared in the South Bend area two complete albino robins, and two that were partial albinos. These birds naturally attracted the attention of every one who visited the regions where they were staying.

The first white robin to be seen at Notre Dame was in the month of July, 1915. This bird, which made its home in the vicinity of the Grotto, was probably an old one, for no person had observed the parents feeding it at any time. In fact, this albino seemed to be looked upon by the other birds as an intruder, and was persecuted by them. It remained near the Grotto about a month, and then disappeared.

The color of this albino was not snow-white, but was of a less intense quality. It was, however, entirely white, and made a pretty picture when seen on the lawn or in the mulberry trees near the Grotto. These trees, no doubt, were what attracted the bird to the spot during the time the berries were ripe.

In the spring of 1920 a partial albino robin was observed on the grounds at Notre Dame near the Community House. A similar specimen was seen in the same place in the spring of 1921. This circumstance would seem to point to the fact that the identical bird of 1920 returned again in 1921. My observations of this robin were not extensive enough to ascertain whether or not it bred here either year. Whenever I saw the bird it was alone.

On July 5, 1921, Mr. W. H. Woollums of South Bend, Indiana, came to Notre Dame to acquaint the writer of the presence of a white robin, which, he said, had been hatched in a tree near his home in River Side Park. Mr. Woollums invited me to go with him to see this albino robin, and I did so the following day.

We arrived in the park at 9:45 a. m., and found the white robin just at the edge of the grass taking a bath in a pool of water made by a leaking hose. Mr. Woolums went into his house and got some bread crumbs. He approached the bird within ten feet and threw the crumbs to it; but the robin was enjoying its bath too much to heed anything else. Presently it felt satisfied and flew to a swing, which was nearer to us both. Here it remained a few minutes, giving us an excellent view. From the swing the albino went up into an elm tree just overhead, where it rested and preened its feathers.

Three days later I made another trip to River Side Park in company with Dr. J. W. Hornbeck, an ornithologist from Northfield, Minn. We arrived at the park at 10:15 a. m., but could not locate the bird for ten minutes. At length a lady who feeds the robin daily, decried it in a tree near her house. Here we observed the bird with our field glasses for five minutes, hoping it would descend to the lawn where we could see it better. It soon began to flutter in the trees, and then flew across the street and alighted in another tree. We followed it, but not too closely. In another minute it descended to the ground, and suddenly the male bird and another young robin came up to the albino. The old bird had a worm in its bill, which was intended for the white fledgling, but was grabbed by its greedy brother. The albino then flew towards the river, but we did not follow it any further. Our view of these robins had been quite satisfactory, and was, perhaps, an experience that few other bird lovers had ever enjoyed.

Dr. Hornbeck, with his powerful field glasses, found the eyes of the albino to be yellowish-pink. Various opinions about the color of the bird's eyes had been expressed by different observers, the more general one being that it was some shade of pink. The bill was a lighter yellow than in the ordinary robin. These variations from the normal robin's eyes and bill seemed to harmonize with the albino's plumage. On the head and throat the color was a dusky white.

Mr. Woolums told me he first discovered this albino on May 23, soon after it had left the nest. At the present writing (July 10) the bird would be about seven weeks old. I was surprised to learn that the parents feed their young so long

after they have been fledged. The lady's custom of feeding this albino has made it extremely confiding, for it will approach a person within two or three feet. Many kodak pictures of this white robin have been taken, and I give here four of them grouped together.



BOOK REVIEWS

In this section are reviews of new, or particularly important and interesting books in the fields of natural science. Books dealing with botany or kindred subjects should be sent to the Editor, the University of Notre Dame. *All other books for review* should be sent to Carroll Lane Fenton, at the Walker Museum, the University of Chicago, Ill. Publishers are requested to furnish prices with books.

TREES, STARS, AND BIRDS. By Edwin Lincoln Mosely. World Book Company, 1920. \$1.80.

This is a book designed primarily for use in schools, but it will be of value to anyone who wants to find out the more essential facts about the things which Mr. Mosely discusses. The style is interesting, and the facts, while not new, are exactly those which most people do not know. The numerous quotations from poets serve to link the natural science of the book with the literature of the world, and they do it far better than could any long formal essay on the relation of poets and nature.

The section of the book devoted to trees is almost a complete popular manual for their study. There is an excellent discussion of the structure of the limbs, trunk, and roots, of various typical tree groups, and of the proper ways in which to care for trees, both old and young. The second part of the book, headed "Stars," not only treats of stars, but the planets, satellites, and nebulae. It, like the rest of the book, is non-technical, but is at the same time accurate and specific.

It is the third section, however—that on birds,—which most arouses my enthusiasm. That section should be enlarged a little by discussions of some of the general facts and problems of ornithology, and then